



Region 6 RPT Teleconference

Monday, May 9, 2011
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Toll-free Number: 800-462-1257
Local Number: 608-237-5850
Passcode: 1716188

A G E N D A

- Roll Call
- Review of meeting objectives
- Review draft priority project statement
- Summary of next steps and follow-up actions

Region 6 Priority Broadband Investment Statement

May 3, 2011

5 Background

The Region 6 Broadband Planning Team has been since February 2012 to identify opportunities to expand broadband availability and use. The benefits of expanded area broadband connectivity are many including but not limited to:

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- Support new business formation, telecommuting and job development;
- Reduce the need to travel long distances for medical care;
- Improve the ability of hospitals, schools, government and others to access specialty skills that improve their effectiveness and efficiency.

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- Improve local residential, business and governmental access to education and training resources;

- Enable seniors to access social security and Medicare information on-line;

- Facilitate farm access to program information, markets and inputs;

- Speed response and improve coordination of emergency services;

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- Facilitate marketing of the region to visitors; or

- Enable government to more efficiently deliver services to local residents.

The Region 6 Broadband Planning Team has identified the need for a coordinated regional effort to mobilize and support area communities to implement projects that improve access and adoption of broadband, especially in underserved areas.

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Specific initiatives could include such things as:

- Utilizing the area library network to implement public outreach to expand awareness of broadband opportunities and deliver technology skills training.

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- Regional sharing of lessons learned through experiences such as the Community Area Networking approach currently underway in La Crosse.

- Expanding the use of social network tools such as Facebook to promote awareness of broadband development opportunities and promote greater collaboration among communities in the region.

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- Support forums that bring together area broadband providers and community members to find solutions for areas where broadband availability is not sufficient or adoption of existing broadband is low.

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This document begins with a description of the regional need and opportunity, followed by an outline of a specific action to facilitate regional coordination implementing initiatives that result in expanded broadband access and adoption.

- 45 The proposed plan is careful to build on and complement other existing related broadband development initiatives happening in the region at the same time.

A plan is only as good as the support it receives from residents, business owners, elected officials, broadband providers and others living in the region. The Region 6
50 Broadband Planning Team invites public review and comment on this plan. Public comments will be utilized to revise the plan to ensure it is responsive to the needs and possibilities for the region.

Priority Need

- 55 More than one-third of the population in Region 6 lives in La Crosse County. In La Crosse County, the average number of people per square mile (population density) is 254. The second highest population density is 48 people per square mile in Monroe County. In Jackson and Buffalo Counties, the average population density is approximately 20 people per square mile. The vast majority of communities in the
60 Region are, smaller than 2,000 people, and surrounded by farms or forestlands.

At a high level, broadband availability follows higher population density where there is a larger customer base and the average cost of deployment is less (because there are more customers to spread the fixed costs). In more isolated areas it is less
65 likely that there will be a wireline broadband service provider, however, increasingly wireless broadband options are emerging. The map below illustrates the pattern of wireline broadband service maximum average download speeds advertised across the region.

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Broadband Coverage Maps
Beta Version

Choose a Broadband Map:

Max Adv Download Speed, Wireline

This map shows the maximum advertised download speed of wireline service. Wireline includes Copper, Fiber and Cable service. These speeds are not typical speeds.

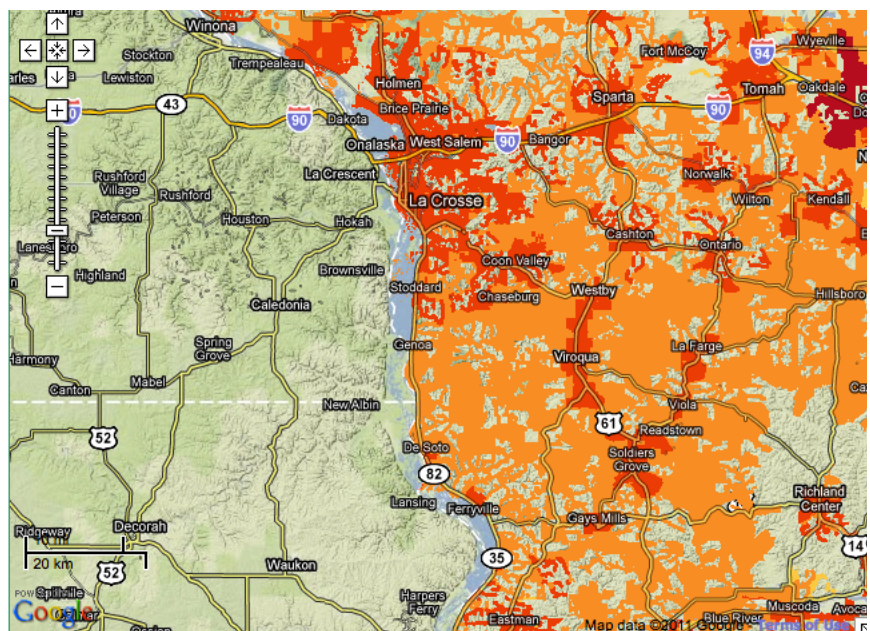
200 - 768 kbps
768 kbps - 3 mbps
3 - 10 mbps
10 - 25 mbps
Greater than 25 mbps

About the Map:

- Click on the map to get more information about that location
- Providers are shown for a general area – not a specific address or location
- Information current as of June 30, 2010

More Information:

- Tips for using the Interactive Map
- Frequently asked Questions (FAQ)
- Overview of the Mapping Process
- Return to HOMECOMEN



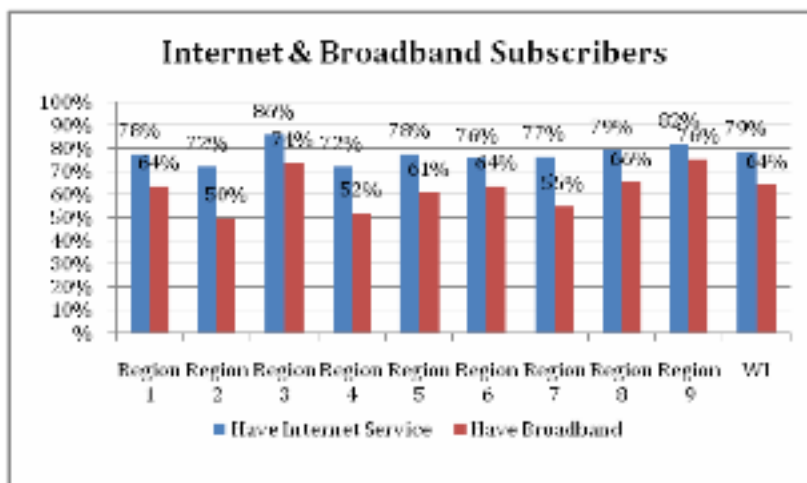
In general, there is significant wireline broadband availability throughout the Region where people live, but there are differences in service as well as gaps, especially in more rural areas.

The table appearing below illustrates the disparity of broadband access across the Region:

County	Average Population Per Square Mile	Percent Population in Census Blocks With Advertised Available:			
		≥ 10 Mbps	3 to 10 Mbps	< 3 Mbps	Mobile Option Only
Adams	29	2	47	51	37
Buffalo	19	55	39	6	2
Jackson	20	45	52	3	3
Juneau	33	63	14	22	20
La Crosse	237	97	2	1	1
Monroe	49	80	18	2	2
Trempealeau	37	54	45	1	1
Vernon	36	51	48	1	1

Source: LinkWISCONSIN Broadband Provider Survey, 2010

With the exception of Adams County, all counties have significant population living in Census Blocks where there is an advertised broadband service offering of greater than 10 Mbps download. These individuals often live within or near towns, villages and cities in each county. In La Crosse County, approximately 97 percent of the population lives in a Census Block where higher speed broadband service is advertised. On the other end of the spectrum is Adams County where half the population lives in a Census Block where advertised broadband available delivers less than 3 Mbps download and in many cases that option is only a mobile provider.



The proportion of Regional population that subscribes to a broadband service is equal the average for the state at 64%. Broadband adoption is impacted by many factors, but most notably older residents, those with less education and those with less financial resources are less likely to subscribe to a broadband service, even when available. The demographic profile below illustrates that the average population in Region 6 is older, less educated and with a lower median income compared with statewide average.

	Percent Older Than 65 Years of age	Median Income, 2008	Percent Adults with HS Diploma or Greater
Region 1 Average	16.3%	\$45,307	81.5%
Statewide Average	13.3%	\$52,103	85.1%
U.S. Average	12.8%	\$52,029	80.4%

US Census of Population Estimates, 2009

However, there are demographic differences among counties in the Region. La Crosse County for example has the highest level of median income in the region and an average population that is younger and more educated than the average for the state as a whole. In Adams County, more than a fifth of the population is older than 65 years of age and median income is approximately \$14,000 lower than the state average. Consequently there is not a one-size-fits all solution that meets the needs of every community in the region to improve broadband access and utilization.

Overview of Regional Opportunity

Providing an organizational framework that brings together broadband service providers and diverse leadership within a region is one of the most effective approaches to addressing broadband service gaps as well as creating more economic and social opportunities as a result of broadband that is available. The Community Area Network Model implemented in the Chippewa Valley to the North and more recently organized in La Crosse is a good example of how coordinated regional leadership can make a difference in broadband availability and use. By working together to coordinate across multiple counties and sectors, greater results can be obtained. However, as noted above, there is a diversity of needs and opportunities across the Region and different approaches may be appropriate for different areas. By centering the initiative on educating and mobilizing community based initiatives, this diversity can be accommodated.

Local libraries represent an important community-based resource trusted to provide communities with information and training to help improve the beneficial adoption of broadband services that is available. Libraries can be a particularly important resource for those members of the community who do not presently have

a broadband connection or computer at home. Community members who gain skills and experience with the Internet through their local library are more likely to see the benefit of subscribing to a broadband service at home or at their business.

135 In addition to libraries, other community “anchor institutions” such as medical
facilities, local government, schools, higher education and public safety facilities can
be a leading edge for the community in promoting wider access and utilization of
broadband. By collaborating together, these anchor institutions can be more
effective in working with area providers to bring necessary communications
140 infrastructure into communities where it may presently be deficient as well as
expanding the adoption of infrastructure already deployed. Medical facilities,
libraries, schools, colleges and universities, public safety offices, local government
along with private business can be centers of innovation. For example, they can
demonstrate the possibilities of expanding telecommuting, personal health monitoring
145 at home or delivery of educational curriculum to homes and businesses using
broadband. Innovations such as these help to create more interest and demand for
broadband and more market incentive to deploy broadband in underserved areas.

Proposed Broadband Investment

150 Additional regional investment is needed for regional collaboration, research,
awareness programs and other strategic actions to expand broadband access among
presently underserved populations in the region.

155 The following table provides an overview of key planned investments:

Type of Investment	Activities	Responsibility
Initiative leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish commitment from appropriate leadership organizations. Facilitate collaboration among regional counties. Oversee network research and planning priority process. Coordinate with on-going regional initiatives. Apply for and manage grants as needed. On-going communication. 	The Mississippi Regional Planning Commission will convene diverse stakeholders including The Western Technical College, UW Extension, k-12 leadership, the area library systems, business leaders, local government, public safety, area medical systems, area broadband service providers and others.
Fund and deliver targeted awareness and skill building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research potential funding sources. Apply and manage grants if appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Libraries Western Technical College Others

initiatives to improve access for underserved populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement targeted awareness and skill building initiatives 	
Address broadband service gaps to key anchor institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize broadband service deficiencies. • Mobilize communities to market themselves to providers. • Engage providers to find solutions to critical broadband service gaps. • Apply for broadband infrastructure grants if appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local leadership team including broadband providers TBD

160 **Key Tasks and Timeline**

Phase 1- Implement collaborative partnerships

 Summer 2011 and on going

165 **Task 1.1.** The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission will host an initial
meeting to organize a working committee of broadband providers, business,
education, libraries, regional planning organizations, local governments, health care,
170 farm organizations and others for successful collaboration to advance broadband
availability and use. Volunteers from the participating organizations will initially
manage the working group. However, consideration will be given to the need for
local fund raising to engage a part-time staff person to help manage regional
collaboration and ensure momentum continues. Staffing for the regional working
group will be incorporated within an existing regional organization to minimize
operational costs.

175 **Task 1.2.** The Region 6 Broadband Working Group will leverage data on broadband
availability, consumer survey results and other information assembled by the
LinkWISCONSIN broadband planning process and other sources. Data profiled will
include a mapping of broadband demand including such things as locations of
180 anchor institutions , residents, businesses and other organizations desiring a higher
level of broadband connectivity. This could be facilitated with an on-line web portal
provided by LinkWISCONSIN enabling consumers to identify areas of broadband
demand. This information, in addition to priorities identified in regional forums,
will be used to build consensus on target projects. Those projects may be included in
185 Phase 3 of this plan.

Task 1.4. The Region 6 Broadband Working Group will create avenues for on-going
communication with the public and broadband providers throughout the region.
This may include the preparation of fact sheets on broadband availability and use;
190 periodic public meetings; and on-line media such as Facebook and Twitter.
Communications generated will serve as another resource to identify broadband
development needs and potential projects important to the region. Those needs will
be communicated on going to industry representatives, elected officials and others
as appropriate.

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**Phase 2—Targeted awareness and Internet skills training programs through area
libraries**

 Initial demonstration Fall 2011 – Fall 2012

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Task 2.1. Regional libraries along with other partners such as Western Technical College are identified as a focal point for targeted awareness and Internet skills training programs as well as public facilities where people can access the Internet. An initial demonstration initiative will be implemented through the La Crosse Public Library. The La Crosse Public Library will engage a volunteer, through Americorp, Coulee CAP or UWL for 6-12 months to identify the target audience, convince them of the usefulness of broadband access and to provide them with training opportunities at the library. The volunteer would be provided with a laptop with broadband access to enable demonstrations in the field. The goal of the project is not to touch large numbers of people, but to identify candidates who seem more likely to be successful and possibly be able to mentor others.

Task 2.2. The La Crosse Public Library demonstration will be utilized as a model for other public libraries in the Region as they become more engaged in broadband issues within their local communities. Other partners such as Western Technical College that has a presence in all Region 6 Counties will also be engaged in expanded outreach. In addition to awareness and skill training programs, most libraries offer important public access to the Internet for those in the region who lack broadband access or a computer at home.

Task 2.3. The Region 6 Broadband Working Group organized in Phase 1 will play a supportive role to libraries bringing together regional collaboration as well as promoting awareness of programs and facilities available from libraries, Western Technical College and other partners. The diverse partnerships organized through the Region 6 Broadband Working Group will also provide a supportive role providing letters of support for grant applications and other funding requests that may be needed.

Phase 3. Address broadband service gaps

Spring – Fall, 2012

Task 3.1. The Region 6 Broadband Working Group will form local based service gap teams including but not limited to representatives from key anchor institution networks as well as local providers. This team will utilize the community-based broadband mobilization model similar to that of the IT group presently organized in La Crosse. Community stakeholders will be organized and supported with research information (developed in Phase 1) to market their community to providers. Providers will be engaged to identify solutions that address broadband service gaps in underserved communities.

Task 3.2. The Region 6 Broadband Working Group will also implement on-going outreach to help mobilize area communities to successfully market themselves to broadband providers. For example when a trench is open, there can be coordinated communication so other utilities can take advantage of the opportunity to bury

broadband facilities. Local government and providers can work on right-of-way issues in advance of the need to lay fiber or construct a tower. By openly sharing construction plans, area health care, education, government, business and other sectors can reduce their cost of completing infrastructure projects. The Wisconsin Public Service Commission can help connect Region 6 with those from other regions in the state working on similar community collaboration models.

Task 3.3. The Working Group will organize regional support for provider, municipal or other organizational loan/grant applications as may be needed to advance solutions to broadband gaps in areas where there is business interest.

Budget

Budget Category	Project 2011 Budget	Project 2012 Budget
Infrastructure	None	TBD
Equipment	None	None
<u>Paid staff:</u>		
Contributed paid staff time	TBD	TBD
Funded paid staff time	TBD	TBD
<u>Volunteer Time:</u>		
Number of volunteer hours	TBD	TBD
Value of volunteers	TBD	TBD

Infrastructure Funding: TBD in 2012 after careful research

Equipment and Supplies: Equipment and supply expenses are expected to be minimal and provided in-kind by participating organizations.

Paid Staff: Initially the initiative will be staffed by volunteers. However, a half-time paid professional is needed to ensure project tasks are well organized, volunteers are coordinated, grant applications are submitted as needed, and communication with all stakeholders are clear and consistent. This position would be based within an appropriate regional leadership organization agreeable to all stakeholders. This position could be contributed in-kind by an existing organization or funded as a new position subject to available funding.

Contributed in-kind staff: TBD

Funded Paid Staff: TBD

Volunteer Time: Given limited resources, most of the key tasks are expected to be accomplished by regional volunteers.

Number of volunteer hours: TBD

Value of volunteer hours: TBD

Anticipated Outcomes and Impacts:

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The proposed broadband investments are anticipated to result in several important positive outcomes and impacts for the region including but not limited to:

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- Greater organized regional collaboration to identify, prioritize and implement actions to improve availability and adoption of broadband services, especially in underserved rural areas.
- More awareness of the benefits of broadband among those presently not subscribing.
- Improved business case for broadband investment in underserved areas.
- Expansion of broadband service investment in underserved locations.

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Three-Year Objectives:

The following objectives are targeted for Region 6 by 2014:

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- An expanded number of communities will be mobilized to market themselves to broadband service providers.

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- At least one library in all eight Region 6 Counties will implement expanded broadband awareness and skill training.

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- More communities will have multiple broadband provider options available for purchase compared with what is available at the beginning of 2012.
- Broadband adoption among present non-subscribers in Region 6 will expand by an average of at least 20 percent over 2012 levels.

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NOTE: These target objectives may be modified after completion of a baseline research.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

320 Subject to available funding, the LinkWISCONSIN/Public Service Commission Team
will support Region 6 with design and implementation of a comprehensive
monitoring and evaluation effort. The monitoring process will focus initially on
collecting data on inputs, activities and processes. The evaluation process focuses on
outputs, outcomes and impacts.

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Inputs → Activities → Processes → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact

330 Examples of inputs include such things as number of volunteer hours, hours of paid
staff time, number of local partners engaged or time spent in planning meetings.
Activities and Processes are such things as progress towards completing a
comprehensive database of unmet residential demand, development of a
memorandum of understanding with local education institution to help with a
335 demand survey, formation of local task groups, collection of baseline data and so
forth. The LinkWISCONSIN/PSCW Team will create on-line tools to support this
necessary data collection.

340 The evaluation process will focus initially on outputs and outcomes defined by the
above objectives. For example reaching a defined number of library customers with
training. Impact data will go beyond outputs and outcomes to determine such
things as the economic impact of new rural business formation; energy savings and
household savings from reduced commuting, tax base improvements from new
rural business development, etc.

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Subject to available funding, a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan will be
designed and implemented early in 2012.

Sustainability Plan:

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Success in attracting the targeted broadband investments will depend significantly
on an upfront project design that assures the initiative will be sustainable into the
future. This sustainability will be achieved through the strategic engagement and
leveraging of existing organized efforts in the region that include but are not limited
355 to:

- Integration of this priority broadband investment initiative within the emerging
structure and plans for existing organizations such as the Mississippi River
Regional Planning Commission, local libraries or Western Technical College.

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- Engagement and partnership with area broadband service providers.
- Strong partnerships with area County-level economic development corporations, k-12 education, healthcare networks and other organizations or individuals.
- Outreach and engagement to appropriate state government entities and legislative audiences.

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In short, the strength and sustainability of the project to expand broadband investment targeted to underserved areas will depend on the effective partnership of multiple existing organizations. The goal is to minimize the need to obtain funding for new operational revenues and contracts. Similarly, to the extent current broadband gaps can be filled through helping to build a business case for existing providers to extend service to fill those gaps rather than the need to find grant or loan resources for infrastructure, the chances of success will be enhanced.

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It is recognized however that volunteer leadership in the region is stretched. Sustainability will be enhanced by successful efforts to obtain funding for at least a half-time paid staff position within an existing organization to provide the on-going leadership and organization to manage these important partnerships.